

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 301727Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2990

INFO SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 08745

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: BRITISH COMMENT ON US MBFR POSITION

REF: STATE 146712; NATO 3582; LONDON 8697

1. TICKELL ASKED EMBASSY OFFICER TO CALL JULY 30 TO RECEIVE COPY OF BRITISH PAPER ON MBFR, WHICH HE SAID BRITISH WILL CIRCULATE IN NATO TODAY AND LEAVE COPIES AT THE DEPT. TICKELL ELABORATED ON COMMENTS MADE JULY 27 BY PECK IN NAC (NATO 3582) AND BY MOD OFFICIAL TO US (LONDON 8697). HE HAD WITH HIM RODRIC BRAITHWAITE, FORMERLY ASST. HEAD OF FCO'S NATO DEPT. AND NOW SPECIAL ASSISTANT IN THAT DEPT. FOR MBFR.

2. COMMENTING ON US MBFR PAPER OF JULY 27, TICKELL SAID HIS OBSERVATIONS WERE TENTATIVE AND PRELIMINARY; BRITISH ARE DOING A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF NEW US APPROACH. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. OVERALL ALLIED REDUCTIONS OF TEN PERCENT ARE TOO HIGH. US FORCES IN THE GUIDELINES AREA SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED BY MORE THAN TEN PERCENT. AT THIS POINT TICKELL READ FROM PARA 8 OF BRITISH PAPER STRESSING LAST

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SENTENCE - BEGIN QUOTE - ANY SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN

NATO FORCES WOULD SO THIN OUT THE LINE AS SERIOUSLY TO
REDUCE NATO'S CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY - END QUOTE.
THEREFORE WHILE WELCOMING US PROPOSAL FOR COMMON CEILING,
BRITISH THINK THERE SHOIL BE COMMON FLOOR AS WELL.
B. US PAPER DOES NOT EXAMINE PROBLEM OF WITHDRAWN
SOVIET FORCES WHICH END UP IN WESTERN MILITARY DISTRICTS
OF USSR. BRITISH REALIZE THAT NEGOTIATING CONSTRAINTS
IN WMD'S OF USSR WOULD BE TOUGH BUT THINK IT SHOULD BE
TRIED BECAUSE IN CASE OF DELIBERATE AGGRESSION THE USSR
COULD DEPLOY ANY WITHDRAWN UNITS BACK TO THE BATTLE AREA
WITHIN A FEW DAYS.
C. THE US PAPER BY ITS OWN LOGIC COMMITS ALLIES TO A
SECOND STAGE MORE STRONGLY THAN BRITISH THINK DESIRABLE,
ESPECIALLY GIVEN THEIR CONVICTION THAT REDUCTIONS OF
EUROPEAN FORCES SHOULD NOT BE NEGOTIATED UNTIL THE
RESULTS OF US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS AND RELATED MEASURES
HAVE BEEN ASSESSED.
D. AS TO SECOND PHASE, BRITISH FEEL STRONGLY THAT WHEN
AND IF IT IS REACHED, NO US FORCES SHOULD BE INCLUDED;
CLEAR IMPLICATION OF US PAPER AND REMARKS MADE BY
AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD AT JULY 27 NAC IS, IN BRITISH VIEW,
THAT US FORCES MIGHT BE AFFECTED IN THAT STAGE AS WELL.
E. ALLIED NEGOTIATING PROGRAM SHOULD NOT BE
PRESENTED TO THE EAST EVEN IN SKELETON OUTLINE AT THE
EARLY STAGES OF NEGOTIATIONS. TO DO SO WOULD REVEAL
TO RUSSIANS ALLIES' IDEA OF FINAL OUTCOME, AND COULD
RESULT IN PIECEMEAL WHITTILING AWAY OF PREFERRED FINAL
OUTCOME AS NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED. BRITISH PREFER TO
AVOID NUMBERS AND SPECIFICS AT OUTSET IN ORDER TO DRAW
SOVIETS OUT; CHIEF NEED OF ALLIES IS CLEAR VIEW OF

DIRECTION IN WHICH THEY WISH TO GO.

F. BRITISH WELCOME IDEA OR PRE-REDUCTION STABILIZING
MEASURES BUT THINK ALLIES SHOULD NOT BE ASKED TO AGREE
AMONG THEMSELVES THAT EASTERN AGREEMENT TO STABILIZING
MEASURES SHOULD NOT BE PRE-CONDITION TO NEGOTIATING
REDUCTIONS; ALLIES SHOULD PUT MEASURES FORWARD AND SEE
WHAT EASTERN REACTION IS. THIS MATTER SHOULD THEREFORE

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BE LEFT OPEN.

G. STRESS SHOULD BE PLACED ON COMBAT CAPABILITY. AS
BRITISH PAPER STATES: BRITISH BELIEVE THAT ULTIMATE
ALLIED OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE AN APPROXIMATE PARITY OF
COMBAT CAPABILITY ON EACH SIDE. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US
AND UK ON DATA BASE MAKE IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO
CONCENTRATE MORE ON COMBAT CAPABILITY THAN MANPOWER
FIGURES.

3. COMMENT:

A. BRITISH COMMENTS ON US PAPER READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THEIR OWN PAPER ACCENT THE OVERRIDING BRITISH OBJECTIVE IN MBFR, NAMELY, THAT IT BE CONDUCTED AS DAMAGE-LIMITING OPERATION. BRITISH ACKNOWLEDGE THAT A

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 08745

EXDIS

GENUINE EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO REACH REDUCTIONS WHICH DO NOT DIMINISH ALLIED SECURITY, AND TICKELL HAS UNDERSCORED THIS POINT BY OBSERVING TO DEAN ON JULY 27 THAT BRITISH WANT TO BE HELPFUL AND INVITE US TO TELL THEM HOW THEY CAN ASSIST US. HOWEVER, BRITISH MISGIVINGS ABOUT MBFR NOW SEEM KEENER THAN EVER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN BRITISH PAPER WAS SUBMITTED TO PRIME MINISTER FOR APPROVAL, FCO AND MOD STATED THAT US PROPOSED OPTIONS IN APRIL 30 PAPER CUT TOO DEEPLY INTO ALLIED SECURITY AND STRATEGY; THEY WOULD IN SOME CASES PERMIT EUROPEAN FORCE REDUCTIONS WHICH BRITISH WISH TO DISCOURAGE AT THIS STAGE; AND THEY DO NOT OFFER SUFFICIENT GUARANTEE THAT ALLIES COULD SECURE THE NECESSARY OFF-SETTING AND

ASYMMETRIC REDUCTIONS IN THE WARSAW PACT'S MILITARY CAPABILITY. FOR THIS REASON, FCO AND MOD ASSERTED, AN EARLY BRITISH INITIATIVE WAS NEEDED NOW, BOTH TO SEEK TO MODERATE THE SCALE OF POSSIBLE NATO FORCE REDUCTIONS AS PROPOSED BY THE US AND TO FOCUS ALLIED ATTENTION ON MAIN SUBSTANTIVE POINTS WHICH MUST BE RESOLVED IF A UNIFIED NATO NEGOTIATING POSITION IS TO BE AGREED BEFORE OCT.30.

B. THE BRITISH ARE STAKING OUT A STRONG, CAUTIOUS POSITION ON MBFR. WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME ROOM FOR BARGAINING WITH THEM ON DETAILED ASPECTS OF THEIR
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POSITION, THE BRITISH SEEM TO BE SAYING THAT THEY PLACE AS HIGH A PRIORITY ON THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE SECURITY NEEDS OF THE ALLIANCE AS THEY DO ON THE POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, LORD CARRINGTON EXPECTS TO GO INTO MBFR THOROUGHLY DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON THIS WEEK. CONTINUING CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BRITISH WILL BE A KEY ASPECT OF DEVELOPING AN AGREED NATO NEGOTIATING POSTURE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, ARMED FORCES, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: worrelsw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LONDON08745
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P750007-1996
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973074/aaaaacnw.tel
Line Count: 197
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 73 STATE 146712, 73 NATO BRUSSELS 3582, 73 LONDON 8697
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: worrelsw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31-Jul-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <28 FEB 2002 by worrelsw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRITISH COMMENT ON US MBFR POSITION
TAGS: PARM, UK, US, NATO, NAC, MBFR, (TICKELL), (BRAITHWAITE, RODRIC)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005